



Vernice “*Strong As*” Armour “Your Leadership Coach for the 21st Century!”

Breaking the “Sound Barrier” between existing and *Excelling*! One of the few and the proud, during the start of the war in March 2003, United States Marine Corps Captain Vernice “Junk” Armour was one of 1,500 female Marines in the Persian Gulf fighting to dismantle the regime of Saddam Hussein in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 33-year-old captain from Memphis, TN, has the added distinction of being the first African American female pilot in the Marine Corps and first African American female combat pilot in U.S. Military history.

Vernice was born in Chicago, IL in 1973, but moved to Memphis, TN at the age of 3. In 1991, she graduated from John Overton High School for Creative and Performing Arts, where she was very active in the music program, class Vice President, and a member of Mu Alpha Theta (the mathematics honor society) and The National Honor Society.

Vernice marched in the military boot steps of both her dads; Clarence Jackson, a former Marine, who married Vernice's mother Authurine, and her father, Gaston C. Armour Jr. of Chicago, a retired major in the U.S. Army Reserves. In 1993, the future combat pilot enlisted in the Army Reserves and in the fall semester joined the Army ROTC program while enrolled at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU). During an Army ROTC career day, the seed of becoming a pilot was planted when Vernice saw the image of a young black female in an Army flight suit. “Now why didn’t I think of that!” was her first thought! In June of 1996 after a brief stint as a Nashville Sheriff’s Dept Correction Officer, Vernice took additional time off from college to accept an invitation to the Nashville Police Academy and graduated as a police officer in December 1996. She graduated from MTSU in December of 1997 with her B.S. in Physical Education: Emphasis in Exercise Science. In 1998, with the aviation seed in full bloom, Vernice was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps on December 12, 1998 and on her way to flight school.



When Vernice finally earned her wings in July 2001, the ambitious pilot ranked No. 1 out her class of 12 and of the last 200 to graduate. As the top graduate, she made the Naval Air Station's prestigious Commodore's List, received the Academic Achievement Award and subsequently made history as the Marine Corps' first African-American female pilot.

After flight school, Vernice was stationed at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton near San Diego, CA, piloting the famed AH-1W Super Cobra. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, she was recognized as the U.S. Military's first African-American female combat pilot. Vernice flew above the deserts of Iraq in her missile-equipped attack helicopter (employing her aircraft in combat pictured at left), engaging the enemy and scouting the roads from her cockpit, making sure they were safe for her fellow Marines and soldiers on the ground. She has completed 2 combat tours of duty in the Gulf.

Vernice was the second woman and first African American woman on the Nashville Police Department's motorcycle squad, Camp Pendleton's 2001 Female Athlete of the Year, two-time titleholder in Camp Pendleton's annual Strongest Warrior Competition, and a running back for the San Diego Sunfire women's professional football team.

Vernice has been featured on Oprah Winfrey, CNN, Tyra Banks, NPR, Tavis Smiley and numerous news shows and TV/radio interviews. She has spoken to organizations such as Bank of America, Booz Allen Hamilton, Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab, and the City of Alexandria, VA. Vernice has also been awarded and recognized by several organizations for being a pioneering pilot and her role in technology and engineering!



Vernice departed the Marine Corps in June 2007, and is a professional speaker and community activist with the message of live with PASSION and breathe with PURPOSE! Each presentation is specifically tailored to meet your organization's needs!



Vernice will teach you leadership, teamwork, and communication skills that will help bring you through your own “Combat” situations! She will show your organization how to instill winning discipline, focus, and empowerment strategies...refined in the military...but now adapted for your management team. **Let Vernice help YOU break the “Sound Barrier” between existing and *Excelling*!**

For more information, pictures, and video visit www.VerniceArmour.com and don't forget to **sign up for her Newsletter!!!**